control domestic use, 3) all exceptions to treaty provisions are approved by unanimous consent, 4) an independent scientific committee is created, and 5) the workings of the consultative committee remain transparent. Sea turtle biologists should be invited to formally participate in upcoming negotiations. As a member of the U.S. delegation in 1994, I was the only biologist at the meeting who was familiar with sea turtle biology and conservation.

It is unlikely that negotiations on the Draft Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles in the Western Hemisphere will be concluded in the near future. Consequently, ratification is likely to be several years away. The Marine Turtle Specialist Group (MTSG) is committed to ensuring that this treaty provides worthwhile protection for sea turtles which go well beyond annual U.S. TED certification. We urge sea turtle conservationists and managers throughout the hemisphere to work with their governments and with us in this effort. English and Spanish drafts of the treaty are available on request from the MTSG office in Washington D. C. (address below).

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RECOGNITION OF A CAPTURED HEAD-STARTED KEMP'S RIDLEY TURTLE BY ITS LIVING TAG

On the night of August 3, 1994, a commercial fisherman caught a live Kemp's ridley sea turtle (Lepidochelys kempii) during shrimping operations with a skimmer net in Bayou Lafourche approximately three miles south of Golden Meadow, Louisiana (29°17'15" N, 90° 13'45" W). The skimmer net is used to catch white shrimp (Penaeus setiferus) in shallow waters (Hein and Meier 1994). The following morning (August 4, 1994), the fisherman transferred the turtle to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries' (LDWF) Lyle S. St. Amant Marine Laboratory at Grand Terre, Louisiana. The turtle was in good condition, measuring 39.4 cm straight carapace length and 38.7 cm straight carapace width. At that time, LDWF personnel detected a white spot on left costal scute 2 and a faint scar on the ventral surface of the right foreflipper. Thinking the white spot could be a "living tag" (Fontaine et al. 1989; Fontaine et al. 1988; and Caillouet et al. 1986) and the scar on the ventral side of the foreflipper an indication where a flipper tag had been attached, the junior author reported it to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Laboratory in Galveston, Texas.

The Galveston Laboratory shipped a portable, battery powered, passive integrated transponder (PIT) tag reader to the St. Amant Laboratory. The reader detected PIT tag 7F7D343B7B, indicating that the ridley was from the 1991 year-class head-started in Galveston. When originally released on May 19, 1992, 23 nautical miles offshore of Galveston Island, the turtle measured 14.7 cm straight carapace length and 13.6 cm straight carapace width. The turtle was at large for 806 days before its capture in Bayou Lafourche and had grown 24.7 cm in length and 25.1 cm in width.

While at the St. Amant Laboratory, the turtle was held in a 6-foot diameter, flow-through seawater tank, was fed fresh fish and shrimp daily, and appeared to be normal. The turtle was released by LDWF into the Gulf of Mexico on September 6, seven nautical miles south of Grand Isle, Louisiana (29°11'12" N, 89°53'42" W).

This occurrence suggests that the living tag is not difficult to discern when Kemp's ridleys are examined carefully. Examination for living tag, PIT tag and magnetic wire tags, are

essential since foreflipper tags are usually lost (Fontaine et al. 1993), in this case within 2.3 yr after release. Observations of this kind demonstrate the value of increased emphasis on tag detection throughout the range of the species and especially at the nesting beach at Rancho Nuevo, Mexico (Byles 1993; Williams 1993; Eckert et al. 1994). All Kemp's ridleys found stranded or captured in any area and under any situation, either alive or dead, should be examined closely for internal tags and signs of living tags (a grafted patch of pale plastron tissue on the carapace), and the results reported to the senior author.

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KEMP'S RIDLEY SEA TURTLES NEST IN SOUTH TEXAS

From 1979-1994, seven confirmed Kemp's ridley sea turtle (Lepidochelys kempii) nests were documented on the Texas coast (Shaver 1994), virtually all at Padre Island National Seashore. In contrast, four nests laid in late May and mid-June 1995 were found on south Texas beaches: one at Mustang Island on 29 May, two at Padre Island National Seashore on 30 May, and one at Mustang Island on 16 June. Three of these turtles were located by visitors and one by a National Park Service employee conducting a patrol for nesting turtles. None of the